

**Frontier Culture Museum Board of Trustees**  
**Executive Committee – Lecture Hall**  
**Draft Minutes**  
**October 20, 2021**

**Members Attending:** Ron Capps, Cliff Garstang, Ned Ruby, Peggy Sheets, Emmett Toms, Paul Vames, Kenneth Venable

**Members Absent:** Pamela Fox, Emmett Hanger, William Sibert

**Guests Attending:** David Trainum

**Staff Attending:** Lydia Volskis, Susan Grable, Cliff Edwards, Megan Newman, Eric Bryan

**I. Call to Order and Welcome** Mrs. Peggy Sheets

Mrs. Sheets called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

**II. Approval of August Minutes** Mrs. Sheets

The minutes of the August meeting were approved as distributed

**III. Agency Report** Dr. Megan Newman

Dr. Newman reported that education visitation is still tracking below the pre-Covid era, but that we are noticing an uptick in onsite and virtual program reservations. The Interpretation Department is planning for special programming through the end of the year, and also for winter projects and maintenance of the sites. German Heritage Days was a success, and while not as large an event as Oktoberfest, was an enjoyable weekend. This weekend, the Museum will host a Revolutionary War reenactment event both Saturday and Sunday; there seems to be increased social media interest in this weekend. The Museum will host the Holiday market on “Black Friday” and plans are underway for Holiday Lantern Tours as well.

She continued that we are working to fill several open positions and will spend time over the winter on trainings and presentations for staff. The Museum had strong visitation in July and August although like education groups, still trending below the pre-Covid era.

Dr. Newman reported that Marketing Director Joe Herget will be retiring December 1, and that the position has already been posted. The position will be open on the state jobsline through

Thanksgiving weekend and we hope to have the new person in place sometime in the early New Year.

The Arts and Architecture Review Board (AARB) has approved the final draft of the Crossing Gallery Plan.

#### A. Finance Report

Ms. Susan Grable

Director of Finance Susan Grable reviewed the most recent financial reports, especially noting that the “cushion” we were able to roll over in the Special Revenue Fund is holding steady at \$320,000. There is about \$52,000 in the federal Cares Act Fund yet to be spent; the funds must be expended by December 17. The Museum plans to purchase video-conferencing equipment, signs and come other items. She said that revenue is steady, and we are comfortable covering payrolls. We have had seven payrolls to date in the fiscal year. Mr. Toms asked how facility rentals are faring, and Dr. Newman said that we are renting the spaces and reservations for the future are increasing.

#### B. Governors Transition Document

Mr. Eric Bryan

Mr. Eric Bryan reviewed the Museum’s required submission for the Governor’s Transition Document Which is traditionally handed to the in-coming Governor and their staff on Inauguration Day. We used the required template and instructions for the comprehensive view of the agency’s mission, budget, org chart, and major pressing issues, which for us include ARMICS, employee retention, plastics ban issues and capital projects. Mr. Bryan said that often when orders and plans are issued, the central agencies in Richmond take a “one size fits all” approach which is often unworkable and even cost prohibitive for small and specialized agencies.

#### IV. Foundation Report

Mr. David Trainum

American Frontier Culture Foundation President David Trainum reported that the Foundation has added two new Members to its Executive Committee. They have also received a bid of \$40,000 to construct the new sign in the traffic circle. He said that Truist Bank will receive a substantial portion of the Smith estate for the Foundation. He continued that the Dices property will be sold, that t The Foundation will be seeking new Members before the start of the Capital campaign. The Foundation will be hiring a new part-time person soon. The Golf Tournament was a success. The Foundation will be in talks with the developer about potential Chik-Fil A employee parking spaces.

Mr. Garstang asked about the odd location of the land sale sign at the front entrance, which is placed in the median between traffic lanes. Mr. Vames will alert Mr. Ry Winston about a possible location change for the sign.

Peggy will meet with Senator Hanger and Delegate Plum soon regarding the Museum’s budget requests.

Ms. Ramona Taylor, of the Office of the Attorney General, presented a new policy for the Museum's Board and Executive Committee regarding virtual meetings. She stated that the Freedom of Information Act does provide some allowances for virtual meetings, and for a person to participate in the meeting from a distance. She reviewed the new policy and said that this is a compliment to the existing Bylaws. The Committee will review the policy and it will be presented at the next full Board meeting in April 2022.

Mr. Garstang made a motion that the Committee approve the policy and that the full Board will approve it at their next meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Capps, there was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

## **V. Old Business**

Mrs. Sheets

Mill

Mr. Bryan

Mr. Bryan presented slides depicting an old mill that has been offered to the Museum for sale. He said that it is not of the correct time period and has no inner workings so is not useful to the Museum, in addition to the fact that years ago we had plans prepared and funding secured for a reproduction mill to our own specifications. Mrs. Sheets urged that the Committee adopt a cautious approach as we will set a precedent. She also suggested we review and amend – if needed – the collections policy to also include buildings. There was some discussion. Mr. Garstang made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vames that the Committee vote to decline the mill sale offer. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

## **VI. New Business**

### **Annual Pass Pricing**

**Mrs. Sheets**

Mrs. Sheets reviewed the proposed changes to annual pass pricing and an increased senior discount. Ms. Grable pointed out that there were no concerns raised when golf cart rental prices were raised earlier this year. Mr. Garstang made a motion, seconded by Mr. Venable that the Committee approve the changes. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Bike Virginia Event 2022**

**Mrs. Sheets**

Cliff Edwards reported that he met with City of Staunton officials yesterday to go over the details for the proposed event. There will be over 2,000 potential attendees. The City will provide water, and there is a sewer line at the location which could accommodate the portable toilet and shower facilities. The Museum will provide space along the front property/Cochran Parkway for parking, camping, tents, toilets and showers as well as a registration tent (the only tent we will provide). Bike Virginia will donate \$4,000 to the Museum and the event will not be on the Museum site or interfere in any way with daily Museum staff or operations. Mr. Garstang made a motion that the

Museum staff proceed to finalize terms with Bike Virginia in a contract. The motion was seconded by Mr. Vames. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Staff salary Increases**

**Mrs. Sheets**

Mrs. Sheets reminded the Committee that Dr. Newman and others have submitted a plan to Richmond as a part of our budget requests, for funds to address the salaries within the agency which are substantially below the median for the same role codes across the state. This may help retain and recruit staff. She gave an example of a valued employee with a growing family who recently left for a job at VDOT which paid \$12,000 more, even though he enjoyed his work here.

**Executive Director Performance Evaluation**

**Mrs. Sheets**

Mrs. Sheets reported that the Executive Committee will work on the Executive Director's evaluation and new EWP for 2022. She noted that under state guidelines all evaluations are underway now.

Mrs. Sheets said that a training/retreat is planned for winter which will involve the senior management team as well as some Trustees to review the past year or two and plan ahead for the future. She also said that she is working on a revamped Board Committee structure for the New Year.

**VII. Next Meeting Dates (Nov. 17, Jan. 19)**

Committee

The next Executive Committee meeting dates will be November 17<sup>th</sup> and January 19<sup>th</sup>. There will be no December meeting.

**VIII. Adjournment**

Mrs. Sheets

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.